

From the LINCOLN EVENING JOURNAL, June 25, 1959, page 2

Here is the sequence of events in the Charles Starkweather case:

## 1957

December 1 Robert Colvert, 21, Lincoln service station attendant, killed on Lancaster County road.

## 1958

January 21 Marion Bartlett, 57; Velda Bartlett, 36; and Betty Jean Bartlett, 2 ½, family of Caril Ann Fugate, killed.

January 27 August Meyer, 70, killed in Bennet farm home. Robert Jensen, 17 and Carol King, 16, killed near Bennet.

January 28 C. Lauer Ward, 48, Lincoln businessman, his wife, Clara, 46 and their maid, Lillian Fencl, 51, killed in their Lincoln home.

January 29 Merle Collison, 37, Great Falls, Montana shoe salesman, killed near Douglas, Wyoming; Starkweather and Caril captured near Douglas.

March 1 Starkweather waived preliminary hearing in Lancaster County Court; represented by Attorney Hal Bauer at request of Legal Aid Bureau.

March 10 T. Clement Gaughan and William Matschullat appointed to defend Starkweather.

March 23 Special investigator Harold Robinson reported "no laxity" in police handling of case.

March 26 Starkweather arraigned in Lancaster District Court, pleaded innocent.

May 5 Murder trial began in Lancaster District Court.

May 23 Starkweather found guilty; jury fixed death penalty.

May 30 Gaughan and Matschullat moved for a new trial.

June 7 District Judge Harry Spencer denied new trial motion, set first execution date of December 17, 1958.

July 5 First appeal filed in State Supreme Court. Because of the death sentence, this was automatic. A petition in error was filed.

September 12 State Supreme Court began review of the case.

October 27 Caril Fugate trial began.

November 21 Caril Fugate found guilty; jury imposed life sentence.

December 17 First scheduled execution date for Starkweather stayed, while State Supreme Court reviewed the case.

December 19 Supreme Court denied appeal, set March 27, 1959 as the second execution date.

December 20 Judge Spencer overruled Caril Fugate's motion for a new trial, sentenced her to life.

## 1959

January 6 Gaughan, Matschullat asked the State Supreme Court to rehear Starkweather's appeal, and reduce the death sentence to life.

January 21 Caril Fugate's attorneys filed motion in State Supreme Court asking for new trial.

January 23 State Supreme Court denied Starkweather's request for a rehearing.

February 6 State Supreme Court refused Caril Fugate's request for a new trial and a suspended sentence.

February 18 Starkweather fired Gaughan and Matschullat.

March 1 Starkweather asked Pardon Board for a hearing on commutation of his sentence.

March 4 Pardon Board granted hearing, set date for April 21, stayed scheduled March 27 execution.

April 21 Pardon Board refused Starkweather plea for clemency, set 3<sup>rd</sup> execution date – May 22.

May 20 Governor Ralph Brooks refused Caril Fugate's request that Starkweather's execution be stayed.

May 21 Starkweather filed in U.S. District Court in Lincoln requests for a stay and a writ of habeas corpus. Judge Robert Van Pelt denied the petitions.

May 22 District Judge Richard Robinson of Omaha granted a stay ninety-eight (98) minutes before the scheduled execution to allow time for an appeal of Van Pelt's decision. The stay was granted until June 4.

May 29 Starkweather filed an appeal to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

June 1 Circuit Court set the hearing for June 4 in Omaha, appointed Milton R. Abrahams and Nick Caporale of Omaha, James Ackerman of Lincoln to represent Starkweather in the hearing.

June 2 Ackerman was replaced by Lincoln Attorney Herman Ginsburg.

June 4 Circuit Court judges in Omaha turned down the appeal, refused to extend the stay.

June 5 Guy Starkweather, father of Charles, wired to the U.S. Supreme Court asked for help.

June 6 State Supreme Court set June 12 as the 4<sup>th</sup> execution date.

- June 9 Attorney James J. Laughlin of Washington, D.C. applied to Justice Charles E. Whitaker of the U.S. Supreme Court for a stay.
- June 10 Justice Whitaker granted the stay to allow time for an appeal to the Supreme Court for review of the case.
- June 22 U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the case.
- June 23 State Supreme Court set June 25 as the 5<sup>th</sup> execution date.
- June 24 Starkweather filed a request for a stay and a new trial in Lancaster District Court; Judge Spencer denied both requests. The State Supreme Court, in emergency session, denied an appeal from Spencer's ruling. Judge Van Pelt of U.S. District Court refused an appeal. Laughlin and Albert Ahern, Starkweather's attorneys in Washington, made unsuccessful appeals to Justices Whitaker and Hugo Black.
- June 25 Starkweather executed.

The following dates are taken from the book Headline: Starkweather (©1993)

### **1973**

- October 31 Caril Fugate's life sentence for the murder of Robert Jensen is commuted to a term of no less than 30 years and no more than 50 years by the State Pardon Board, composed of Governor J. James Exon, Secretary of State Allen Beermann and Attorney General Clarence A.H. Meyer. She will be eligible for parole in 1976.

### **1976**

- June 8 The Nebraska Board of Parole grants Caril Fugate parole at the earliest opportunity following the commutation of her life sentence; Fugate moves to Michigan, where she reports regularly to a Michigan parole officer.

### **1981**

- September 28 Caril Fugate's parole is discharged by the Nebraska Board of Parole, on the recommendation of her Michigan parole officer, thus ending any remaining legal restrictions on her freedom.